

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-9, 17 and 18.

1. (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (previously amended) A method for removing an inflatable laryngeal mask from a patient without dislodging any inserted endotracheal tubes or related medical instruments into the patient's laryngeal opening by using a tube retaining device, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the tube retaining device through an opening in the inflatable laryngeal mask exterior to the oral cavity;

securing the tube retaining device within a proximal end of the previously inserted endotracheal tube within said inflatable laryngeal mask;

deflating said inflatable laryngeal mask;

simultaneously withdrawing said deflated inflatable laryngeal mask from the patient's oral cavity and exerting a retaining force on the tube retaining device sufficient to prevent friction from dislodging said endo-tracheal tube; and

sliding the inflatable laryngeal mask off the proximal end of said retaining device.

11. (previously amended) A method for removing an inflatable laryngeal mask from a patient without dislodging any inserted endo-tracheal tubes or related medical instruments into the patient's laryngeal opening by using a tube retaining device, the method comprising the steps of:

securing the tube retaining device within a proximal end of an endotracheal tube;

inserting the endotracheal tube through an opening in the inflatable laryngeal mask;

removing said inflatable laryngeal mask by withdrawing said inflatable laryngeal mask from the patient's oral cavity and exerting a retaining force on the tube retaining device sufficient to prevent friction from dislodging said endo-tracheal tube; and

removing the inflatable laryngeal mask.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein removing the inflatable laryngeal mask comprises separating the tube retaining device from the endotracheal tube and sliding the inflatable laryngeal mask off an end of the tube retaining device.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein removing the inflatable laryngeal mask comprises sliding the inflatable laryngeal mask off a proximal end of the tube retaining device.

14. (previously added) A method for removing an laryngeal mask from a patient without dislodging any inserted endo-tracheal tubes or related medical instruments into the patient's laryngeal opening by using a tube retaining device, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting an endotracheal tube through an opening in the laryngeal mask;

securing the tube retaining device within the endotracheal tube;

removing the laryngeal mask by withdrawing the laryngeal mask from the patient's oral cavity and exerting a force on the tube retaining device sufficient to prevent dislodging the endotracheal tube; and

removing the laryngeal mask.

15. (previously added) The method of claim 14 wherein removing the laryngeal mask comprises separating the tube retaining device from the endotracheal tube and sliding the laryngeal mask off an end of the tube retaining device.

16. (previously added) The method of claim 14 wherein removing the laryngeal mask comprises sliding the laryngeal mask off a proximal end of the tube retaining device.

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (previously added) A method for removing a laryngeal airway from a patient's oral cavity without dislodging any inserted endotracheal tubes or related medical instruments into the patient's laryngeal opening by using a tube retaining device, the method comprising the steps of:

securing the tube retaining device within a proximal end of an endotracheal tube;

inserting the endotracheal tube through the laryngeal opening;

removing the laryngeal airway by withdrawing the laryngeal airway from the patient's oral cavity and exerting a retaining force on the tube retaining device, the retaining force being sufficient to prevent friction from dislodging said endo-tracheal tube; and

removing the laryngeal airway.